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as antagonistic to the spiritual life, what Horace says of nature,

“Expelles furcâ, tamen usque recurret.”

Meanwhile, men feel the necessity of worship, and have too much intelligence and good taste to worship stocks and stones. They therefore gratify the instinct of reverence by those more covert forms of idolatry, in which altars, paintings, priests attired like solemn harlequins, and singing women, receive and absorb the worship that should rise higher, and send the worshipper back with an unburdened conscience to the arena of pecuniary competition, the routine of fashionable dissipation, or the enjoyment of luxurious ease.

Under both these burdens Christendom now groans, and religion suffers increasing detriment. We agree with our author in his felt need of a new, more fervent, more effective dispensation of the gospel, — of a dispensation which shall have for its basis the simple, unperverted facts and truths of the Scriptures fairly interpreted, and shall build upon them the fabric of a worship, in which mind and heart, sense and soul, shall combine to offer the entire and living sacrifice.

ART. VII. — *Lectures on the History of France*. By the RIGHT HONORABLE SIR JAMES STEPHEN, K. C. B., LL. D., Professor of Modern History in the University of Cambridge. New York: Harpers. 1852. 8vo. pp. 710.

BEFORE his appointment, as the successor of William Smyth, to the Professorship of Modern History in the University of Cambridge, Sir James Stephen was generally known as an author only by a series of remarkable contributions, on historical and religious topics, to the *Edinburgh Review*. These were collected and published in a separate volume about eight years ago. Without belonging to the highest class of critical productions in theology and history, they had striking merits both of

thought and expression, that justified the favor with which they were received. The style is rich and pictorial, betraying a careful study of Macaulay's manner, but inferior to it in ease, grace, and fluency. It is more grave and didactic, often swelling into a weighty and impressive eloquence, that proceeds rather from the deep feelings and strong convictions of the writer, than from rhetorical artifice. In this respect, indeed, his articles are favorably distinguished from Macaulay's, which, with all their brilliancy and richness of illustration, are often superficial and deficient in earnestness, having the sparkle and impetuosity of a mountain stream, but also its shallowness and want of sustained force. Sir James Stephen's writings show more heart; fervid religious persuasion, which might swell into fanaticism if it was not mastered by a vigorous intellect, pervades and colors his whole course of thought. Events and characters naturally present themselves to him under their religious aspect; sincere but not ostentatious piety, which often has a touch of gloom, betraying the severe school of theology to which he is attached, governs all his reflections and judgments. The expression of this belief is commonly subdued and chastened, as if he feared that the careless and frivolous world would not understand or sympathize with it; but it is betrayed in spite of himself, warming his manner with a kind of soft religious tenderness, which wins the reader's affection at the same time that it commands his respect. Nothing can be less obtrusive or ostentatious, and nothing more pervading or heartfelt. It is almost the only kind of religious writing, belonging to our own day, in which we cannot even suspect the presence of hypocrisy. His articles on the Clapham Sect, and on the writings of Isaac Taylor, "the Recluse of Stamford Rivers," as he calls him, are genial and winning portraiture, which owe their attractiveness probably as much to the pencil of the artist, as to the original features which he has endeavored to copy.

These Lectures on the History of France are, in every respect, deserving of the reputation of their author. They are the rich fruits of his first two years in office, as he was appointed only in the summer of 1849; and their early publication manifests a generous disregard of the additional labor thus imposed upon the Professor, who,

having given these to the press, and thus placed them in the hands of his future auditors, must immediately prepare others to be read in the lecture-room. His predecessor, Mr. Smyth, had been over thirty years in office before he published a single lecture; and when, not long before resigning his Professorship, he did give to the printer the manuscripts which he had so often read to a small circle of undergraduates, it was evident, even from a hasty perusal of them, that they had been written more than a quarter of a century. As they abounded in errors of the press, mistaken references, and incorrect citations, it was certain that they had had little revision, and probable that portions of the manuscript had become nearly illegible.

But it was not our purpose to complain of Mr. Smyth's Lectures, which, though somewhat stale at the time of publication, are yet entertaining and instructive. They mark out a judicious plan of historical study, and contain ingenious and just comments on the authors that are recommended for perusal and reference, and on the characters and events to which incidental allusion is made. The lecturer did not propose to write history, but only to give some hints about the proper method of studying it. He pointed out the path, but did not accompany the traveller on his way. Sir James Stephen offers more direct and effectual aid. He selected as a topic the history of France; and, finding that "a considerable portion" of those whom he was about to address had "no acquaintance with any modern language except their own, and that the most popular and elementary French works on the history of France were apparently unknown to a still greater number of them," he undertook to give them, in two courses of Lectures, a compend of this history, which might serve, after publication, merely "as a class or lecture-book for the use of the students." Disclaiming any attempt to be original or profound, he promised only to be simple, familiar, and elementary.

Yet he justly claims for his book a higher character than that of a mere compilation. The mode of grouping the details of the subject, and giving unity to the consideration of them, is entirely his own. So, also, we are bound to add, is the view which he takes of the incidents of French history, and of all history. It is eminently a Christian view;

the tone of the book, in this respect, is strikingly accordant with that of the author's former publication. He utterly discards and condemns the fatalist doctrine, with which the works of most of the recent French historians, especially of those who make much pretension to expound the philosophy of history, are imbued, and to which the writings of Carlyle and Grote have given some currency even in England. Of Michelet, he is unwilling to say any thing, because "unable to characterize his writings except in terms which might seem to fail in the respect due to a living author, who has long enjoyed much popularity." In our eloquent lecturer's view, the development of events on the great stage of the world is not a blind and inexorable succession of causes and effects, which might have been known beforehand, so that a perfect history could have been written *à priori*, if one had had a perfect knowledge of the attendant circumstances. It is rather a grand spectacle of the enforcement of those laws by which God governs the moral universe, which must be studied in the light of his revealed word, and with a belief in his constant, superintending providence, or we shall fail to perceive its meaning, and the whole will appear as a maze of purposeless incidents.

In a "Dedicatory Letter" to Dr. Whewell, the indefatigable Master of Trinity College, Sir James Stephen incidentally gives some hints about the past and present state of the University of Cambridge, with especial reference to the course of studies and the means of instruction. We have already quoted from this letter a plain statement of the attainments of those who were to form his audience in the lecture-room, which may serve to console those who are wont to lament the great inferiority of our American Colleges to the great English Universities. It is certain that he would not have found the older undergraduates, either at Yale or Harvard, so imperfectly qualified to receive his instructions. He bears honorable testimony, however, to the spirit of improvement, which, of late years, has so vigorously assailed many of the ancient abuses of the place, and has even caused it to be accused of a tendency to needless innovation. Our lecturer took leave of Cambridge as an undergraduate in 1812, remarking that the three or four years that he had

lived there "were passed in a very pleasant, though not a very cheap hotel. But if they had been passed at the Clarendon, in Bond street, I do not think that the exchange would have deprived me of any aids for intellectual discipline, or for acquiring literary or scientific knowledge." He returned after an interval of thirty-eight years, and found that a marvellous change had occurred. Innovations had taken place "which would have made the hair stand on end on those venerable wigs which were worn by the Heads of Houses in my time." New studies had been largely introduced, and some of them were occupying a foremost place in the system of instruction. Presiding over the whole movement, the high priest of innovation and reform, was the zealous Master of Trinity, of whom it has been said that "his *forte* is science, and his foible is omniscience," and who seemed determined to imbue the whole University with his own multifarious erudition.

The following remarks, of so judicious and competent an observer as Sir James Stephen, are pregnant with instruction for our American Colleges, in most of which an attempt is made to teach at least thrice as many distinct subjects as are comprised even in the new and extended *curriculum* for the University of Cambridge.

"In the contemplation of all these changes, my chief solicitude, of course, was to ascertain what were the particular duties which had devolved on myself. I found that I was not only expected, like my predecessors, to read public lectures on Modern History, but that I was also to conduct examinations on that subject, sometimes alone, and sometimes in concert with others—alone, in the case of pupils who, being unambitious of honorary distinctions, might seek merely to obtain from me a certificate of their acquaintance with some one or two particular historical books; in concert with others, in the case of candidates for rank and honor among the students of the moral sciences.

"I will not conceal from you that I regarded, and still regard, with some regret, my share in this apportionment of labor; not, indeed, that I consider it either as onerous or unequal, but that I am constrained to view it as of very doubtful utility.

"Within the compass of the 'moral sciences' embraced in these examinations are included Moral Philosophy, English Law, General Jurisprudence, Modern History, and Political Economy. Our honorary distinctions are to be awarded for proficiency, not

in any one of these pursuits alone, but in them all collectively. The candidates for such distinctions must, until within a month or two of their examination, have continued to prosecute those scientific, literary, and theological studies, in which the entire body of our pupils are engaged throughout the whole of their academical course. To myself, therefore, it seems simply impossible that they should really be conversant with even any one of the five moral sciences in question. A young man who, under such circumstances, should really be conversant with them all, might read the life of the admirable Crichton without incredulity and without despair.

"We shall, however, from year to year, propose questions on all of those subjects, and we shall, undoubtedly, receive many ingenious and specious answers to them. I, for one, shall read such answers with regret; for if there be any one habit of mind which I should especially desire to discourage in men entering into the business of life, it is the habit of substituting a shabby plausibility for sound knowledge; and how can we avoid promoting that disingenuous and pernicious practice, when we invite the aspirants to distinction among us to submit themselves to an examination in sciences which we have not allowed them time to investigate or to understand? For example, let any one who ever devoted himself to the study of the law of England say whether a few brief interstitial hours, stolen with difficulty from his indispensable academical pursuits, will enable a young man, in his twenty-first or twenty-second year, to know any thing worth the knowing of that boundless, and toilsome, and ever-shifting field of inquiry. Yet an adroit and dexterous man may, even under such circumstances, assume the deceptive semblance of such knowledge. I could, therefore, earnestly have wished that each candidate for distinction in the moral sciences had been permitted to choose some one such science to which alone his examination was to be confined, and had also been first discharged from his classical and mathematical labors during a period sufficiently long to enable him to pursue it below the mere surface." pp. vi. - viii.

But it is time to pass to the general contents of this volume; or rather, at first, to the ideas which it suggests as to the proper mode of studying history. It is one excellence of these Lectures, that the writer of them appears to have been conscious throughout, that his proper function was not to write history, but to teach it; though the necessities of his particular position, arising from the recent changes in the University, and from the very limited

knowledge which the undergraduates could be supposed to possess of the subject, obliged him to prepare, in the first place, a compend or text-book of instruction, which might serve as a basis for his subsequent lectures. He has succeeded in forming such a compend, without rendering it a mere sapless abridgment, or dry catalogue of facts strung together in chronological order, and, at the same time, without sacrificing detailed instruction to comprehensive statements and vague generalities. In other words, he has found a clew to French history, — a principle both of selection and arrangement, by the aid of which, events, characters, and inferences present themselves in due order for the elucidation of his main subject, and fall into natural groups around it without crowding or confusion. It is not certain that the leading idea which he has thus adopted, to give unity and method to his summary view of the annals of France, is the only true one for such a purpose, or even the best that could be discovered. It is enough that it does not rest upon a mere hypothesis or imaginary theory, so that facts must be suppressed, invented, or distorted to make room for it; and that it answers the purpose of bringing together the main features of the subject in natural order, and bearing an obvious relation to each other, so that their meaning can easily be perceived, and the details themselves be distinctly recollected. Until some clew of this sort is discovered, history is but an endless record of unmeaning facts, which burden the memory without profiting the understanding.

To an Englishman or an American who begins the study of the history of France, one of the first inquiries which suggests itself is, How it happened that the English and French nations, taking the same point of departure, living originally under similar institutions and influences, and imbued with an equal love of liberty, still arrived at very dissimilar results, — the one steadily and surely developing a system of constitutional freedom, in which the powers of the crown, the nobles, and the people mutually sustain and limit each other, and the other gradually losing all its ancient safeguards of liberty, and degenerating into the uncontrolled despotism, which was finally shattered by the explosion of 1789? The question, or the problem, is as old as the time of Voltaire, who first

stated it in general terms, affirming that the results in the two cases were "as unlike as the constitution of Venice is to that of Morocco." Sir James Stephen propounds it as the main object of his investigation, and keeps it constantly in view throughout his Lectures; as the inquiry is broad enough to bring up, in strict connection with it, every thing in the history of France which it was important for him to consider. It branches out into a number of subsidiary inquiries, among which are,—an investigation of the manner in which the French municipalities, or incorporated cities and towns, contributed to conduct France from the state of a Feudal Confederation to that of an absolute monarchy; how the Crusades to the Holy Land, and still more the Crusade against the Albigenses, contributed to produce the same result; why the authority of the privileged orders of France, sacerdotal and noble, did not avert the growth of the absolute dominion of the French monarchs; why the States-General, which, in theory, had as much authority as the English Parliament, were equally powerless for this end; why the Reformation did not yield in France its appropriate fruits of civil liberty; why the power of the pen, so favorable to free institutions elsewhere, here only served to consolidate despotism; and many others, which afford equal scope for that comparison of English with French history to which it was the object of the lecturer to direct the attention of his hearers.

It may be inferred, from this account, that the work is not such a detailed record of events, chiefly in chronological order, as usually passes under the name of civil history. It is rather a series of disquisitions on the constitutional history of France, as contrasted with that of England, giving incidentally, it is true, much information about the progress of events, but still more frequently sending the hearer or the reader to other books to obtain the knowledge which is either presupposed by the Lecturer, or is necessary to fill up the outline that he has sketched. One important branch of the subject, the Feudal System, is omitted altogether, because it is so fully discussed in the very accessible writings of Robertson, Hallam, and Guizot. The answers that are given to the several questions stated in these Lectures are not neces-

sarily the only ones, or even the best that may be framed. In this respect, the teacher of history has an easier task than the writer of it. The latter must propound some theory which shall link together the different portions of his theme, and solve all the problems which they suggest; on the correctness of his theory, the value and completeness of his work will depend. The former is only required to indicate the topics of research, and to place before the student the materials which will enable him to investigate them for himself. These Lectures, consequently, profess to give only an introduction to the history of France, and to form a basis upon which the subsequent instructions of the Lecturer may rest. The information that they afford respecting the complex details of the judicial and financial systems of the old French monarchy, and of the distinctions of rank and divisions of power which existed under it, together with the changes which the whole system successively underwent, is tolerably full and minute. In these particulars, the book is a valuable companion, or manual of reference, to aid one in the study of the original authorities. But the personal history of the several monarchs of France, and the domestic and foreign occurrences of each reign, are noticed only so far as they elucidate the progress of the constitution. The Lectures contain a history of the institutions of the country, rather than a biography of the people. The writer's aim is not to amuse, but to instruct. He passes a severe sentence upon the pictorial and fanciful manner of a fashionable school of modern historians, who have degraded their calling by making it subservient to the purposes of fiction. Formerly, romance was woven out of the shreds of history; now, history is pieced together out of fragments in gaudy colors, after the fashion of romance.

When Dr. Arnold began his lectures upon Modern History in the University of Oxford, he observed that the student's first difficulty on approaching the subject arises from the extreme voluminousness and complexity of the materials which are placed before him. He is at a loss where to begin, and learns, to his dismay, that the history of one nation covers so much ground, and branches out into so many inquiries, that he may spend a

lifetime in studying it, and still find not only that his knowledge of it is imperfect, but that, his information being not merely enlarged but corrected as he proceeds, a considerable portion of the labor of each year must be given to unlearning what he has learned the year before. A single visit to the alcoves of a good public library is enough to dishearten him, when he sees the formidable array of volumes relating to his theme. The Colonial History of New England and the war of American Independence are two comparatively restricted subjects, either one of which may yet severely tax the industry of many years, and leave the student, after all, still inquiring and eager to obtain more light. A fair knowledge of the vast system of the English Common Law, considered in its sources, its progress, and its present state, is but one of the requisites of a thorough acquaintance either with English or American history.

“What shall we say to the great collection of works directly subsidiary to history, such as Rymer's *Fœdora*, and the various collections of treaties; of bodies of laws, — the statutes at large, for example, for England only; of such works as the publications of the Record Commission, or as the Journals of the Houses of Parliament? Turning then to lighter works, which contain some of the most precious materials for history, we find the countless volumes of French Memoirs, magazines, newspapers, (it is enough to remind you of the set of the *Moniteurs* in the Bodleian,) correspondence of eminent men, printed or in manuscripts, (the library at Besançon contains sixty volumes of the Letters of Granvella, Charles the Fifth's great minister,) and lastly the swarm of miscellaneous pamphlets, which, in these later days, as we know, are numberless, and which, in the seventeenth and even in the sixteenth centuries, were more numerous than we sometimes are aware of. I might go on and extend my catalogue, till it far exceeded in length the Homeric catalogue of the ships; but I have mentioned quite enough for my purpose. We may well conceive that, amid this boundless wilderness of historical materials, the student may be oppressed with a sense of the hopelessness of all his efforts. Which way shall he choose among so many? What progress can he hope to make in a space so boundless?” Arnold's *Lectures*, Am. ed. p. 94.

We cannot commend Dr. Arnold's method of overcoming, or evading this difficulty. He advises the student to begin with the history of a particular country and period;

to read diligently one author, a contemporary if possible, for an outline of the subject ; and then "to branch out," by reading every thing which will throw light upon his account, selecting those volumes and portions of volumes only which relate directly to the theme, and omitting or passing lightly over every thing else. This may be fragmentary or piecemeal reading ; but he justly observes that it is not a superficial method of study, for it will train the student from the outset to habits of comparison and research, and keep the attention awake and the judgment active more effectually than can be done by plodding laboriously through many volumes from title-page to colophon. For instance, if the History of France in the middle of the fifteenth century be the subject, we should begin by reading thoroughly the memoirs of Philip de Comines, a contemporary writer, who "gives us the action and the mind of the actors at the same time, telling us not only what was done, but with what motives and in what spirit it was done." Having thus formed a skeleton of the subject, as it were, the dry bones may be clothed with flesh by gleaning from many authors all that will elucidate, verify, or enlarge the account given by this one. If a treaty be mentioned, for example, the original document may be hunted up in some of the great collections of European treaties, and the abridged account of it by the historian may be verified or corrected. Statutes, proclamations, and ordinances published at the time must be examined ; the memoirs, speeches, and letters of distinguished men, who figured at the time, must be read ; and even that portion of the contemporaneous literature which does not immediately relate to the history of events must be consulted, as it will all throw light upon the character of the age, and assist us in the judgment that we may form of occurrences and individuals. By thus dipping into many books, more complete and accurate knowledge will be acquired, than by making a thorough study of a few.

Now, this method may be very well as far as it goes. But it does not obviate the whole difficulty ; it rather perplexes one by affording a more lively sense of its extent and importance. He who begins the study of history in this manner will not be likely to advance far ; he may

not even go beyond the history of France in the middle of the fifteenth century. If he be not an indefatigable student, with much leisure at command, he will find enough in the annals of this period, thus studied, to occupy the better portion of his life. Besides, the chief point of the difficulty is here lost sight of; for why select this particular time and country, rather than any other? And on what principle can any other be preferred? Where the student should begin is a question that Dr. Arnold leaves unanswered; and let him begin where he may, a plan of study is placed before him which will leave him little or no power to advance.

Perhaps we shall have a better chance of solving the problem satisfactorily, if we first consider what are the uses of history, and with what purposes it ought to be studied. A mere record of names, dates, and events is not history; and nothing can be more barren and unprofitable than a perfect recollection of such a record. That Cæsar conquered Pompey at Pharsalia, that he was afterwards assassinated in the Senate-house, that the party which profited by his death was subsequently crushed at Philippi by Octavius, who soon assumed the chief power in the state, and became the first Roman emperor, under the title of Augustus, — are facts which it may be convenient to remember, on account of the frequent allusions to them in Roman and modern literature; but which, in themselves considered, or taken thus nakedly, are as meaningless, and profitless to remember, as the birth, marriage, and death of some obscure Englishman, half a century ago, which are chronicled only in a village newspaper. A very good selection and arrangement of such facts may be found in any good compend of history for the use of schools; and a fair knowledge of such a compend is a sort of prerequisite for the study of history properly so called, and an indispensable element of a good common education. The value of such an outline of facts consists, not chiefly, but solely, in the explanation that it affords of the allusions, citations, and references with which all literature abounds. It is not, therefore, any more an introduction to the study of history than to the study of literature; it is just as essential to enable the pupil to read Shakspeare and Milton under-

standingly, as to open for him the pages of Gibbon, Robertson, and Hallam. A superficial knowledge of the facts is all that is essential for either of these purposes. If more minute information at any time is found necessary, the cause which renders it necessary also indicates at once the kind and the manner of reading—which will supply the defect. Just as soon as we find a definite purpose or object for the study of a particular portion of history, we cease to be perplexed by the extent and voluminousness of history in general. We find a clew to the labyrinth precisely when we want one ; for the want itself constitutes the clew.

Dr. Arnold and others, who have proposed a plan for the study of history, or have attempted to lay out a course of historical reading, have made the great mistake of supposing that a full knowledge of the facts is the only point to be gained, and that it can be gained only by laboriously completing and filling up, step by step, the outline that is afforded by one's school-boy studies. To this plan we object, first, that the execution of it would be an endless, and, secondly, that it would be a profitless undertaking. It would be endless, for, if one could live to the age of Methuselah, and study during as many hours every day as a German professor, he could not "fill up" the history of all countries, for four thousand years, in the way in which Dr. Arnold proposes he should "fill up" the history of France in the middle of the fifteenth century. It would be profitless, for a mere recollection of names, dates, and events can subserve no other good end than that of explaining the common historical allusions which we read or hear every day ; and these are sufficiently explained by Worcester's "Elements," or any other school compend. There was as much shrewdness as pertness in the remark of a little girl, who said she was afraid to ask who Nimrod was, for fear her teacher would tell her ; *and it would be so useless to know.* Surely there must be a higher purpose for the study of history than the mere gratification of curiosity. It is useless to know any fact, if it does not illustrate some truth, remove some difficulty, or teach some lesson. It may be said, indeed, that every page in history, when we have duly pondered it, will be found to teach some useful lesson. Very true ; then the

value of that page consists in the lesson which, after due meditation, it suggests; and not in the barren record of facts which it contains. As the number of pages is countless, we must be guided in the selection of them by the particular lesson that we wish to learn.

Pure history resembles pure mathematics in one respect; it is not so much a science in itself, as a means and a help for the study of other sciences. In its application consists its whole value. It is a record of the experience of mankind; and the experience of the race, just like the experience of an individual, is of little worth, except so far as it throws a light upon the future. The share which every nation claims of the historian's page is proportioned, not to its numbers, or its wealth, or the magnitude of its territory, but to the scope and richness of its experience, and to the applicability of the lessons derived from that experience to the circumstances of later times. Why is the history of Greece, for a few centuries before the Christian era, still a subject of eager study by the statesmen and philosophers of our own day? while the annals of savage tribes, far more numerous than the Greeks, occupying vastly a larger portion of the earth's surface, and preserving their national characteristics and separate existence for a longer period, are now irretrievably lost because no one ever cared to preserve them. Evidently because, from their improved civilization, active minds, wandering habits, and versatile character, the experience of the Greeks was richer, and more profitable to teach the lessons which it behooves us, in modern times, to learn. Why, also, is the student always advised to study modern history first, before that of ancient times? and the history of his own country and race, before that of other nations? It is because the lessons derived from the latest experience, other things being equal, are most likely to be applicable to the circumstances of our own day; and because the nearest parallel to our own particular circumstances is to be found in the antecedent history of our own people, rather than in that of another race and clime. We refer here, chiefly, to political experience, because it is generally supposed that the legislator and the statesman, more than any other class of men, find history full of meaning and instruction to them in their peculiar calling.

It may be so, as history is generally written; for it is mostly a record of the political revolutions of states. But taken in its broadest sense, history is full of instruction to all men, because it is a record of the whole varied experience of mankind. Hence it is to be studied in that broad and discursive manner which Dr. Arnold so strongly recommends;—not only in what bears its form and name, but in the original authorities;—in the records of legislation and commerce; in letters and contemporary memoirs; in medals, architectural remains, and other antiquities; in the whole range of art, literature, religion, and law. The formal historian is but a compiler and the maker of an abridgment; the thorough student must accept him only as a guide to the original sources of information.

With this view of the nature and uses of history, there can be no doubt as to the point where the study of it is to begin, or as to the principle which is to guide and limit our researches. The student must commence with an object in view, or an end to be obtained. He must have a question to be answered, a doubt to be settled, or a problem to be solved. In other words, he must have something to study history for,—some use to which his acquisitions may immediately be applied. Objectless reading is always desultory; and when the field for excursion is so vast, it is no wonder if he who starts without a purpose never finds himself at his journey's end, and soon becomes discouraged with wandering through a wilderness. The particular object or inquiry with which the student begins is a matter of very little importance. Of course, one which is best suited to his tastes, which is most interesting to him at the moment, or has been most recently suggested by his previous reflections and studies, will furnish the best immediate guide for his historical researches. He need not fear, whatever it may be, that it will lead him on a devious or eccentric path, or that his labor will throw no light on the object he has in view. If the question which occupies him relates to any thing out of the limit of the exact sciences,—if the rich experience of all mankind under any circumstances can tend to elucidate it, he may be sure that the scroll which contains the record of that experience contains something also which will tend

to remove his doubts or afford an answer to his inquiries. We say that it will "tend" to do so; a complete answer may not be attainable — may not even be desirable. But while in search of it, he will be enlarging his knowledge of history, which we suppose to be his original intention. He will be forming habits of research, comparison, and judgment; he will be reading with an active and intent mind, and not with an idle and gaping one, through which information passes like water through a sieve. He will not be driven to a perusal of the latest school of pictorial and imaginative historians, for want of interest in the study of any other. Above all, he will not be in want of a teacher to tell him where to begin or where to stop; or be in danger of giving up the attempt to grasp any portion of the subject, because he sees plainly that he cannot master the whole.

We will try to indicate a few of the questions, or problems, which may thus serve as guides and incitements to the study of history, selecting those which are most general in their scope, and therefore most likely to lead off the student upon the widest range of investigation. More definite and limited inquiries will readily suggest themselves to those who choose to confine their efforts to a narrower field.

A question has been raised as to the origin and nature of civilization, which is interesting both in its philosophical and religious aspect. Archbishop Whateley maintains with much plausibility, that civilization cannot be of human origin, for there is no instance on record of a nation which has risen from barbarism by its own efforts. The torch of learning and refinement has been passed from hand to hand, each nation receiving from others the light which it was powerless to kindle. Trace the progress as far back as we may, we shall come to some race whose civilization is an inexplicable fact, except upon the hypothesis that it was immediately imparted to them from above. It is strongly urged, also, that a rich, flexible, and fully developed language is an indispensable prerequisite for any progress, not only in literature, but in the various arts of life, the mind not being capable of any application of its highest powers except through the use of this great medium of thought. But if civilization

could not have commenced except by the aid of such a language, for a still stronger reason such a language could not have been invented or perfected except by a highly civilized people. If this be so, we have, alike in the origin of language and the origin of civilization, an ineffaceable record of a great primeval revelation to mankind, which had incontestably a moral and intellectual purpose. But this theory will not find ready acceptance, for it overthrows the whole fabric of the many ingenious speculations that have been framed, not only to account for the origin of language, refinement, and the arts of life, but to trace their progress, step by step, up from the rudest beginning.

Whatever force there may be in the *à priori* considerations relating to this matter, it is obvious that the question can be settled only by an appeal to history; and it involves a very extended inquiry into the origin and character of Egyptian, Jewish, Grecian, and Roman civilization, including an estimate of the degree of each, of the importance of the sources to which each may be attributed, and of the causes which may be assigned for its decay and ruin. In considering the manner in which different nations successively became preëminent in the arts and in mental culture, causes must be sought for the constant tendency of civilization to move westward; and the subsidiary question arises, how much geographical position and climate have to do with the intellectual progress of a people. The vast influence of various systems of religious belief, considered as means of hastening or retarding the growth of civilization, is to be studied by the light of history, as well as by reasoning upon the principles of human nature. Coming down to modern times, the circumstances which attended the Revival of Letters are to be carefully examined; and Guizot's admirable works on the progress of civilization in Europe will light the path of the inquirer, not only by what is directly told in them, but by the additional questions that they suggest, and by the sources of information that they indicate. It is obvious that the main topic of investigation will carry the student, if he sees fit, over nearly the whole ground of ancient and modern history, keeping constantly before him an object of research, and thus furnishing a prin-

ciple of selection which will not only save him from the embarrassment which might otherwise arise from the copiousness of the materials, but will arrange the acquired knowledge in his mind so that it will be most firmly retained and easily recalled for future use.

Another curious subject of inquiry, which may serve as a thread to one's historical researches, relates to those inherited qualities of race, upon which so much light has recently been thrown by the sciences of ethnology and comparative philology, and which have strongly affected the course of political events on the continent of Europe in our own day. The minor question, whether pure or mixed races have shown the more vigorous character, and wielded the mightier influence on the world's affairs, is in itself a broad and attractive subject of investigation. The Jews afford the most striking example of an unmixed race, preserving their national characteristics unimpaired through a long succession of centuries, in the largest number of localities, and under the greatest variety of circumstances. With these may be contrasted the Romans and the English, in whom the great admixture of blood may be regarded as a cause or a consequence of the migratory, enterprising, and conquering spirit, which added so many countries to their dominion. But the question relating to pure or mixed blood is but one branch of the great ethnological problem, which may lead the inquirer into a review of all history. It may fairly be objected to most historical works, including those of the highest reputation both in ancient and modern times, that they have regard rather to geographical and political, than to ethnological divisions; that they contain too much of the history of nations, and too little of that of nationalities; that they are too much a history of governments, and too little a history of the people. The instinct of race is strong, and sometimes establishes fraternal relations between those who are widely separated in space, and cut off from each other by the greatest dissimilarity in their respective governments. It has become a powerful weapon in the hands of modern political agitators, — often bruising, it is true, the hands which wield it incautiously, but always showing, by the magnitude of its effects, that it is a vigorous and ineradicable principle in

human nature. During the commotions of 1848, it gave birth to most of the disputes which menaced, for a time, the peace of Europe; and though reduced to sullen quiescence now, if another great revolutionary outbreak should occur, we may expect to see it governing the movement and directing the storm. Already these forebodings seem to have given a direction to historical inquiries, on which they reflect light and interest.

Another guide and motive for historical investigations has already been followed with so much success, that the results even now constitute a distinct department of the science, and, as such, have been embodied in distinct treatises. Besides the proper history of individuals and of nations, we have now the history of institutions, whether political, social, economical, religious, or traditional;—if that epithet, for want of a better, may be applied to designate such manners and customs as cannot properly be ranked under either of the foregoing heads. To trace out the origin, character, and effects of any one branch or division of them, as illustrated by the history of the nations which have lived under them, would be a broad and profitable inquiry. True, the immediate result of the inquiry in either case would be, not so much the acquisition of a greater or less amount of historical knowledge, as the formation of an opinion or a theory in that branch of speculative or political philosophy which is directly concerned with the character and effects of such institutions. But this amounts only to saying that the knowledge would be applied to a useful purpose as fast as it was acquired, and not that it would be less real or thorough. The means are nominally considered inferior in dignity and importance to the end which they are made to subserve; but the end may be a distant, even an unattainable one, while the use of the means is immediately and constantly productive of good. Hunting is not the only amusement in which the pleasurable excitement of the pursuit far exceeds the value of the game. Practically, we believe, no one ever studies history to much purpose, or acquires any extensive knowledge of it, who has not such an ulterior end in view,—some object to be obtained beyond that of merely making himself acquainted with history. The science itself, as we have already

said, is properly a means or *organon* for the pursuit of other sciences.

Mr. Hallam, in his Constitutional History of England, and Sir James Stephen, in the Lectures before us, have restricted their attention to the political institutions of the two countries, and thus have gained unity, method, and completeness for their researches, without extending their results beyond all reasonable compass. Their works, though of moderate length, are not mere compends of a story which is fully told elsewhere. In one sense, they cover the whole ground, as nothing is designedly omitted which tends to illustrate the subject. In another point of view, much is left for those who may undertake to glean after them; as the topic is one of greater or less extent, according as the word "Constitution" is used with a broad or restricted meaning. In this country, it is usually applied to a single written instrument, formally adopted at a very recent period, and the history of which, consequently, may be very briefly written. Still, these paper Constitutions, as they are termed, are only new drafts and formal reënactments of provisions of law which have long been in force, the origin of some of them being traceable as far back as the Anglo-Saxon Octarchy. And they actually prescribe but a small portion of the fundamental law under which we live, the remainder of it being held to be sufficiently established by long usage and popular affection. In England, and in France down to the Revolution of 1789, the word has a far more comprehensive signification. "By the word Constitution," says Lord Bolingbroke, "we mean, whenever we speak with propriety and exactness, the assemblage of laws, institutions, and customs, derived from certain fixed principles of reason, directed to certain fixed objects of public good, that compose the general system by which the community hath agreed to be governed." Sir James Stephen assumes the accuracy of this definition, and infers from it "that we must seek the Constitution of any commonwealth, and therefore of our own, not in the organic structure of its government, but in the living spirit by which it is habitually animated; not in a rigid analysis of the rights and the functions of the various orders of the citizens, so much as the primæval tendencies, the cherished

habits, and the venerated maxims by which the national polity has been moulded and directed." It is in conformity with this view, that he has resolved his whole subject into an answer to the single question, which, as we have stated, forms the basis of his inquiry.

If we go back to the very commencement of this theme, we meet with a problem which is extensive and difficult enough to constitute, in itself, an inducement and a direction to a very wide course of historical reading. We refer to the question respecting the origin of government. One fact is admitted on all hands;—that every person owes allegiance to the government under which he is born, and whose yoke he cannot shake off at his own will and pleasure. Let him place the duty of natural allegiance as low as he may, it is not for him to determine whether there shall be a government or not; that question is settled for him. And the obligations incurred, from the mere fact of his birth in a given country, are by no means inconsiderable. His actions are restrained or guided by laws which go beyond the natural requisitions of morals, (as in the case of the revenue laws,) forbidding certain things which are not forbidden by the law of nature, and enjoining others, such as the payment of taxes, which are not required by that law. True, government yields him protection, and the tax paid is the price of that protection. But it is not for him to say whether he will purchase this commodity or not, or whether the price paid is a fair one. These questions are never asked of him, as an individual, even under the most popular government that was ever constituted. He is required—he is forced—to accept the protection, whether he will or no; and to pay the price demanded, though he may think it an exorbitant one. He cannot easily change his allegiance; England asserts that he cannot change it at all. According to her doctrine, if he emigrates, and, under a government of his own selection, bears arms against that under which he was born, he is liable, if captured, to the punishment of death as a traitor. And other governments, though they do not push the principle as far as England does, still require certain formalities of naturalization to be observed, and some time to elapse, before they will admit the original tie to be dissolved.

How comes it that any such obligation, — which seems directly to contradict our fundamental republican maxim, that all men are born free, — is imposed by the mere fact of birth in one locality or another? We may look at this question historically, and ascertain from books and other historical records, how government was first actually constituted; or we may look at it in a political or moral point of view, and inquire why the government, however or whenever constituted, ought to be continued. In the former case, with which alone we are concerned at present, three different causes have been assigned for the origin of the framework of society; — military power, patriarchal authority, and mutual consent. A very wide induction of facts, dependent on much historical research, is necessary to determine which of these causes is the proper or predominant one; and with this problem in view, the inquiry into the primitive conditions of society, which is usually a dry and obscure one, acquires fresh interest and dignity.

We need not carry the enumeration of such questions any farther. There is evidently no lack of them, suited to every variety of taste; and under the guidance which any one of them affords, the student of history ceases to be perplexed and appalled by the extent and voluminousness of the materials which are spread before him. These *Lectures on the History of France*, coming from one whose profession it is to teach history, have naturally suggested our remarks, as they contain a successful application of the system here recommended, though they do not indicate the whole extent of the difficulty, or point out, as we have endeavored to do, the method by which it may always be avoided or overcome.

We have not space left to consider at length the explanation which Sir James Stephen gives us of the great contrast presented by the history of the English and French monarchies. The correctness of his theory must be tested by a full examination of the evidence adduced in its support; and for that the reader must be referred to the volume itself, as no abstract can do it justice. It must not be inferred, from the terms in which his leading question is propounded, that the Lecturer is animated by an excess of national feeling or prejudice. On the contrary,

no quality is more conspicuous in the work than the scrupulous and philosophical impartiality with which it is written. We close this imperfect notice of it by extracting a single passage, as a specimen of the judicial fairness with which he has examined the whole history of a country that has been for centuries the greatest rival of England both in arts and arms. While speaking of the confusion and distress into which the government of France was thrown by internal causes, in the beginning of the fifteenth century, he remarks as follows.

“The battle of Agincourt was fought in the midst of these tumults. It is impossible, and perhaps, if possible, it might not be desirable, to repress the exultation with which we dwell on that marvellous victory; yet neither is it desirable to conceal from ourselves the fact that our heroic ancestors triumphed over a disunited people — over an undisciplined army — over generals at once unable to command and unwilling to obey — over princes of the blood who had debased themselves into mere demagogues — and over a king whom Providence had smitten with an incurable madness. To these causes, more than to his own capacity or valor, Henry was indebted both for that triumph and for his subsequent successes. . . . That Shakspeare is not only the best, but the only tolerable, historian of the wars waged by the Roses against France and against each other, has passed from a sportive jest into almost a serious article of our received literary creed. At the risk of a seeming treason to the majesty of our great dramatist, and of a seeming insensibility to our national glories, I must avow my regret that he ever wrote those parts of his historical dramas (if his they really be) which celebrate the reigns of Henry V. and of his less famous, though far worthier son. The most exalted genius has really no privilege to propagate misconception and prejudices hostile to “peace on earth and good will among men.” That “myriad-minded man” was not, after all, exalted so far above the common level of the human intellect, that, from those heights, he might teach his worshippers to call evil good, and to put darkness for light. The wars of Henry V. were among the greatest crimes which disgrace the annals of Christendom, as they drew down upon England, in her own civil wars, one of the most swift and fearful examples of providential retribution. Henry himself, though a lion-hearted captain, has no place among the great masters of the art of war. His comrades, who, under the names of Fluellen and the rest, have so long provoked our merriment, might have been exhibited with greater real, though with less dramatic truth, as barbarians who

employed the arts of civilization to convert the fair realm of France into an Aceldama, and who bequeathed to the most distant generations of Frenchmen a hatred of the English name which it is difficult to condemn, even when we most regret or censure the excesses to which it has occasionally given birth." pp. 289, 290, 291, 292.

ART. VIII. — CRITICAL NOTICES.

1. — *The Diplomacy of the Revolution, an Historical Study*. By WILLIAM HENRY TRESBOT. New York: D. Appleton & Co. 1852. 12mo. pp. 169.

THE very modest pretensions of this little volume ought not to cause its substantial merits to be overlooked; it affords another illustration of the truth, that the real value of a book is often in the inverse ratio of its size. The author, a gentleman of South Carolina, having made, for his own gratification, a careful study of the diplomatic history of the American Revolution, depending exclusively upon the original accounts and records, and comparing them very critically with each other, has here given, in a very concise manner, the results of his investigations. The book contains only a summary of information, but it is a just and accurate one. It manifests no bias from preconceived opinion, and is not warped by any fondness for original and striking speculation. So far as it goes, for it pretends not to enter into details, it is a very safe guide. We have been particularly struck with the acuteness of the writer in analyzing the mass of diplomatic correspondence, and presenting in a few words the chief points of each negotiation, and the marked epochs in its progress, together with a sketch of the circumstances which assisted or retarded the efforts of the negotiators. The object of the work is not controversial; it is not the writer's purpose to assail or defend the reputation of any one of the American ministers to the European courts, or of the sovereigns with whom they endeavored to form treaties of alliance or commerce, or from whom they sought to obtain a recognition of our national independence. We think he shows great sagacity and perfect fairness in estimating their individual peculiarities, and the value of their respective services. Had we space remaining, we would gladly borrow his rapid and vigorous sketches of the different views with which Franklin, Adams, and Jay approached the final